



## *The President's Daily Brief*

*Secretary Castle 21 May 72*

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*Top Secret*

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*Sunday Cable*

PDB BRIEF  
21/5/72

VIETNAM

The Communists are maintaining pressure on government forces in several areas, but no new major ground fighting has been reported. South Vietnamese forces with the assistance of heavy airstrikes have turned back enemy attacks on the government's relief column south of An Loc. The column remains stalled a few miles short of the city.

In the central highlands, light enemy artillery and ground attacks continue near Kontum City, while government forces are conducting small spoiling operations north of the city. Intercepted enemy messages and captured prisoners point toward a resumption of the Communist effort against Kontum City sometime in the next two or three days. In Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnamese forces still hold Ba To District town, but the Communists apparently have been able to isolate the defenders and prevent any resupply or reinforcement.

East of Saigon, in Phuoc Tuy Province, an estimated battalion-sized enemy force on 20 May

entered the district town of Dat Do apparently unopposed and began constructing defensive positions. South Vietnamese territorial forces are now engaging the Communist force.

In the delta province of Kien Giang, fighting continues for control of Kien Luong District town, but neither side has made an all-out effort to establish control. South Vietnamese forces are holding on in the center of town and have been able so far to ward off repeated enemy probes.

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EGYPT

On 17 May, Egyptian security authorities arrested a number of persons associated with former vice-president Zakariya Muhyeddin [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Other prominent Egyptians [REDACTED] have been put under house arrest. [REDACTED]

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*The arrests reflect a decision by President Sadat to move against political opponents who recently submitted a petition critical of his policies. Sadat suspects Muhyeddin of inspiring the petition even though he did not sign it. The petition, recently published by a conservative Beirut newspaper, criticized "excessive" Egyptian reliance on the USSR and called for "the formation of a national front to assume charge of planning a policy for the national liberation struggle." In a speech on 14 May, Sadat warned that he would not tolerate the establishment of any institutions outside Egypt's constitutional organizations and said that any persons attempting to create such organizations would be punished.*

(continued)

*Sadat's actions against critics of his relationship with the USSR may have been partly intended for Moscow's benefit.*

*Muhyeddin is believed to command considerable respect from Egypt's military leadership and this may have deterred Sadat from moving against him directly.*

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WEST GERMANY

The constitutional court has promptly refused to accept challenges brought by two individuals against the Eastern treaties. The threat of a similar action by the Bavarian state government has also apparently been overcome. A leading state official has stated flatly that Bavaria will not seek a court ruling on the treaties.

*Bavaria's decision not to risk opprobrium in what would almost certainly be a losing court suit clears the way for President Heinemann to sign the law ratifying the treaties as scheduled on 23 May.*

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NOTE

Laos: On Friday, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma stymied a challenge from rightists in the National Assembly when their resolution calling for his government's resignation failed to come to a vote. Two new resolutions were introduced providing for the maintenance of Souvanna's government with some minor changes. Action on these motions is expected on Monday. The ouster resolution was promoted by the powerful Sananikone family, which had been pressing him to fire his minister of finance. Souvanna also continues to refuse to fill portfolios held open for the Lao Communists under the Geneva Accords of 1962 in order to maintain a framework for their future participation.

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